

UDOT chooses I-15 reconstruction team

Matt Reichman - Daily Herald | Posted: Thursday, December 10, 2009 12:55 am

The Utah Department of Transportation announced Wednesday that Provo River Constructors won the bid to take the reins on Interstate 15 reconstruction in Utah County.

PRC, an association of local and national contractors, won the job with a proposal that will stretch the \$1.725 billion budget from Lehi down to Spanish Fork. The group's proposed December 2012 finish date -- two years ahead of UDOT's schedule -- certainly sweetened the deal as well.

The scope of the Utah County I-15 Corridor Expansion project (CORE) was essentially to widen I-15 as far south of Lehi Main Street as possible, overhauling several interchanges along the way; it was up to three competing contractors to show just how far south UDOT's dollar could go.

The inclusion of Spanish Fork's jumbled Highway 6/I-15/Main Street interchange, once thought to be just out of reach, had become a key piece of the proposals.

"We're really excited that the winning proposal did an excellent job meeting the needs of Spanish Fork," I-15 CORE project director Dal Hawks said. "Even though in the beginning, we weren't sure we would be able to do it, it was always a goal."

Starting spring 2010, PRC, headed by Fluor Corporation, Ames Construction Company, Inc., Ralph L. Wadsworth Construction Company, Inc. and Wadsworth Brothers Construction Company, Inc., will widen I-15 by two lanes in each direction (four lanes total) from Lehi to Spanish Fork, extend the freeway express lane from University Parkway to Spanish Fork and revamp 10 interchanges and 55 bridges along the way.

"We are very pleased that UDOT recognized the innovation that we're bringing to the project," PRC project director Tuhr Barnes said.

Part of that winning innovation, I-15 CORE spokesperson Heather Barnum said, was the group's ability to combine aggressive construction with minimal day-to-day transportation impact. The accelerated time line means travelers will see construction down the entire corridor simultaneously (as opposed to phases), Barnum said, but PRC's plan is to keep all of I-15's current lanes open throughout the majority of construction.

"In general, except for one six-month period, we expect to keep the same lanes that are available now, open," Barnes said. The group will also invest in a considerable amount of temporary pavement to build provisional lanes and ramps to keep things moving.

"It's not the easiest way, but UDOT made it clear that providing as much capacity in the corridor as possible was one of their highly rated selection criteria."

The slumping construction market can, in part, be thanked for PRC extending its project scope down to Spanish Fork. Less than a year ago, it was unlikely, at best. Residents and city officials of Spanish Fork, including state Rep. Mike Morley, have campaigned for work on Highway 6 over the past year. Morley called the expanded project goals the "silver lining" of a weak construction market.

The state has chosen Provo River Constructors for the reconstruction of I-15 from Lehi to Spanish Fork. Construction is expected to begin in April and end in 2012. Graphic courtesy of UDOT